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A guide to avoiding noise complaints

What constitutes noise?

It's a violation to allow any noise to be heard across your property line between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. or more than 50 feet away and across your property line anytime.

Tips to avoid getting a noise complaint off campus:

- Think about others. Recognize that everyone has a right to peace and quiet in their homes, and that your neighbors may have small children and early bedtimes.
- Get to know your neighbors. When you first move in to your house, take the time to introduce yourself to your neighbors and talk.

see Noise, page 5

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Student renters can expect to reap benefits of housing downturn

Josh Ayers

Cal Poly students who choose to live off-campus come fall may see the benefits of a competitive rental market in the wake of the recent housing slump and an increase in capacity at Poly Canyon Village.

Poly Canyon Village’s current capacity is 1,531, which includes staff housing. That capacity will expand to 2,664 and the complex has already received 2,991 applications as of last Friday, according to Preston Allen, executive director of University Housing.

Unlike this year, where the PCV housing option was offered only to sophomores, Allen said that the application process will now be opened up to off-campus students as well.

“It will be interesting to see if there’s any interest from the students who are already off campus to now come back on campus and live in Poly Canyon Village,” he said.

Amenities such as high speed Internet, cable television, phone lines, as well as a custodial staff to clean common areas are all included in PCV’s monthly rate of about $700 per month.

Compare that figure to the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce’s 2009 Economic Profile for the city of San Luis Obispo that reported that rental rates in the county have gone up 11.4 percent and that a one- or two-bedroom off-campus rental averages $896 and $1,128, respectively. Most also require a security deposit and do not include all utilities.

Monica Guevara, an office administrator for McNamara Real Estate in San Luis Obispo said that her company hasn’t seen a significant rise in the rental rates for the properties that it manages.

“For the most part, across the board, we really haven’t been raising a lot of rents,” she said. The company, which manages more than 400

see Forecast, page 14
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Mustang Daily
*Game Page

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Living off-campus:
the search begins

With the competitive rental market of a college town, students looking to live away from the busy Cal Poly atmosphere often have to start searching now to have the best options to choose from.

That's especially true if you have a larger group of people all looking to live together.

"I'm looking for a three bedroom place, and there are not a lot of options with finding a house right now," said child development sophomore Molly Roach.

Those who do start the search early often strike it lucky it, though.

"I looked around February or March for a place to live, and applied early for anything that was being offered," said liberal studies senior Kerrj Mills. "The process was easy for me and my roommates because we took the first thing we saw and ended up liking it."

These different searching tools act as a guide in looking for off-campus housing around San Luis Obispo County:

Craigslist

Craigslist is a great way to start searching for housing. The Web site, which is essentially the free online equivalent of newspaper classifieds, offers an easy way to browse houses, apartments and rooms in the area. Those needing a room or roommate can easily make a free listing.

"I started looking for housing three to four weeks into winter quarter because I heard from my friends that I should start looking as soon as possible," said psychology sophomore Cambyn Boone-Isaacs. "I usually use the housing link on the Cal Poly Web site and Craigslist."

continued on next page

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Under the housing section of Cal Poly's Web site, students can navigate houses or apartments under the Off-campus Housing tab in the upper right-hand corner. A list of privately owned apartments are available, along with the link to the apartment complex or property management company's Web site.

The site also offers useful advice and resources for student renters.

San Luis Obispo's local newspaper lists houses, apartments and rooms for rent in its classifieds section, which are categorized by town within the area. This is a great start to compare prices and see other rentals that are available outside of San Luis Obispo.

Facebook Marketplace
Facebook's marketplace, which lists everything from jobs to free stuff, adds the advantages of social networking to the rental search. This marketplace is easy to navigate based on the user's network or another network and can be searched via its navigation bar.

SLO-offcampushousing.com
The Web site of the San Luis Obispo Off Campus Student Housing Association, slo-offcampushousing.com hosts a brief directory with summaries of its eight member apartment complexes: Valencia Apartments, Mustang Village I, Mustang Village II, Murray Station, Brazil Heights, El Dorado Apartments and Garfield Arms. The site also has maps and some information on tenant rights, budgeting and the basics of living off campus.

Rent.com, ForRent.com and Apartments.com
These nationwide rental search engines can be helpful ways to search for housing based on very specific criteria, including city, minimum and maximum rent amounts, number of rooms, etc. Rent.com and Apartments.com require you to register with an e-mail address before you can search their listings. ForRent.com does not.

— information compiled by Greenville Logino

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— Information compiled by Genevieve Loggins

Cheap

Ross

This downtown store offers plenty of houseware and decorative items including dishes, flatware, small pieces of furniture, bedroom and bathroom stuff for low prices.

continues on next page

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Beverly’s Fabrics

Located downtown next to Ross, Beverly’s offers student discounts and all the supplies needed for make-it-yourself decorations or craft items. The store also has some small furniture, clearance offerings and storage items, perfect for the typical college student’s cramped room.

Cheap

Goodwill and thrift stores

Goodwill offers two locations: one on South Higuera, and the other on Industrial Way. It provides shoppers with a variety of used items, often in good shape. The stores offer furniture ranging from book shelves, coffee tables, couches, and tables, to suite any specific need. The location on Industrial Way offers better selling prices, and other household items measured in a plastic crate, and sold by weight. Different thrift stores around town, including Old Mission Thrift on Higuera Street, carry items donated by the public and change every week.

continues on next page
Swapmeets
San Luis Obispo County has two swap meets one at the Sunset Drive In at 255 Elks Lane, every Sunday morning (it opens at 5:30 a.m.), and one in Nipomo at 263 N. Frontage Road. Venders bring items ranging from clothing, furniture, and household items to cars and vintage accessories. This is the best place to make a deal and find one of a kind items.

Garage Sales
Another way to find decorations or household furnishings are at garage sales throughout the county. Check out the local listings in the newspaper under the Classifieds section for the location and date of each sale.

Craigslist
Craigslist always provides a large range of furniture, and different decorative pieces for any home space, and can be navigating easily through the web site under San Luis Obispo. Other popular ways students are shopping for their home is under the free listings, and other miscellaneous items for the cheaper price.

Free
Check Craigslist and other classified listings for free items or get proactive and look in heavily student-populated neighborhoods, especially at the end or beginning of the quarter, for free stuff on the street. And there’s always dumpster diving.
From the mouths of bargain hunters:

Sort through other peoples' old stuff

"I usually go to Target, but some of my favorite things I've found have been garage sale-ing with my mom," said business senior Tiana Graham.

Stalk the sidewalks

"I buy picture frames at Ross, because they are reasonably priced," said communications senior Steven Wolf. "Me and my roommates often find furniture around college housing, or even things are free on the side of the road. I honestly just look for giveaways."

Snoop for sales

"I like going to Urban Outfitters because I often find items on sale, and they're stylish, usually fitting my taste," said business senior Ryan Lee. "San Luis Obispo is a good place to find good deals because of all the college students, and generally things aren't that expensive at retail stores."

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Roommates: a match made in heaven... or hell

Alisha Asson
Editor's Note

You come home after studying for hours in the library only to find 20 people at your house in various states of drunkenness. You have a huge midterm the next day and there's no way you'll get any sleep at this rate. Yelling at your roommate isn't going to do much good considering the state of mind he's in so you end up sleeping on a friend's couch. Sound familiar?

Finding a roommate you can live with is a key component to having a good time in college. A roommate can turn into your best friend or your worst nightmare so finding a compatible one (or multiple ones) is essential. If you can afford to live by yourself, that's great, but many people want the college roommate experience or don't like to live alone for security reasons.

Fashion typically don't have a lot of choice when it comes to a roommate. When students are paired with roommates in the dorms at Cal Poly, they are only asked whether or not they smoke, according to housing assignment supervisor Marilyn Allison. She noted they try to keep like-ages together, but don't do a detailed survey of student interests to "keep it simple."

It might seem like a good number of students would want to switch rooms since smoking is the only criteria on which assignments are based, but apparently that's not the case.

Assistant director of housing Carole Schaffer says the university conducts a "Quality of Life" survey each year and one question specifically pertains to whether or not students are satisfied with their current room assignment.

"Over 90 percent of students are at least satisfied all the way up to very satisfied with their roommate," Schaffer says. "People always say we should do a lengthy questionnaire but our experience over the years is that the students that need to decide once they get here that they need to do a room trade, we're able to accommodate that."

For those who live off campus, roommates can be friends, strangers or people referred by friends and colleagues. There are a number of Web sites that offer ways to find roommates or rooms that are being offered for rent. Craigslist.com, roommates.com, the classifieds on sailuisobispo.com and calpolyloops.com/housing all offer listings of available rooms as well as people looking for roommates.

More.com also offers surveys and articles to find out if you're ready to live with someone else and what type of person might be best for you. "Are You Ready for a Roommate" and "Renting a Place with Others" can be a starting point in your search for the perfect roommate.

Also consider more non-traditional methods of finding roommates. Animal science senior Jana Black found her first roommates through her father. He was a handy man and met a group of women who were living together while working on their house. Black's father heard the women needed another roommate and told them his daughter was attending Cal Poly and needed people to live with.

Black says other roommates moved in through word of mouth or by responding to advertisements on Craiglist.com.

"It was kind of random and there was no drama and some personalities clashed that way," Black said. "Some girls were younger and at different maturity levels."

For the most part though, they got along well. When they did have issues, such as cleaning the kitchen,
 Forecast
continued from page 5

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property in San Luis Obispo County and has about an 80 percent student client base, has had to adjust to the housing slump, but has been fortunate to have avoided any foreclosure issues so far, something that Guarra said may have plagued other companies.

The combination of the housing downturn — an anticipated 6.1 percent decline in home prices and a 10.4 percent decrease in sales according to the Chamber of Commerce's report — and the presence of Poly Canyon Village has put renters in a position to be choosy in demanding lower rental prices and better amenities.

"It has had an affect on our rentals," Guarra said. "We definitely try to prepare for additional rentals being on the market due to Poly Canyon. It adds competitiveness so in order to combat a lot of the owners of the properties we manage have been doing a lot of upgrades just to try to keep up with how competitive the market will be."

McNamara has taken several steps to remain competitive, including encouraging property owners to upgrade appliances, replace carpets and tile and continually evaluating the properties to ensure that they're appealing to renters.

Allen, who shares university housing information with the off-campus community, said that renters who aren't keeping up with the upgrades would be the one's who suffer in the current economy.

"If they are a good, solid complex and are respecting the information that's being presented to them as an opportunity to take some action and make some changes in their housing program, they should be fine," he said.

"It's those who offer substandard housing — (who) haven't changed the carpet in their apartment in the last 10-15 years, (who) haven't painted in the past 10-15 years, and really take the student community for granted — those are the ones that are really going to feel the effects of the marketplace."

On the home sales side of the picture, the sharp decline in home prices means it's a buyer's market, although many sellers are reluctant to let their homes go at such low prices, according to Keith Byrd, a local Century 21 realtor.

"There's not a lot of motivated sellers right now," he said.

Byrd, who has experience helping parents of Cal Poly students to purchase homes in the area, said that there's not a lot of inventory in the campus area that is on the market. He said that people in the area have approached him to sell their home but after a price evaluation, they decide to hold onto the property and to keep renting it out.

"Majority of them are saying 'we're going to wait,'" he said.
Finding off-campus housing in San Luis Obispo is a time-consuming affair and finding cheap housing is even more tiresome and a task that seems to be increasingly impossible. Yet over the years, students have figured out some tricks to finding cheap places to live. These tricks can help to save money in the long run, but may require some sacrificing of personal space or comforts along the way.

Being a Resident Advisor

Remember dorm life and living under the rules of resident advisors? Contrary to popular belief, RAs are not there to ruin the lives of freshmen but rather to benefit from a free single dorm room, a meal plan, and to gain leadership experience that looks good on a resume. “I think an advisor job is an excellent opportunity to learn professional skills, leadership skills, and it’s a fun job,” said Suzanne Fritz, associate director of residential life and education. “The monetary benefits are a lot for students and I certainly encourage students to apply, but they should really want to learn those skills.

Students interested in becoming a RA should be aware that the position requires approximately 20 hours of on-duty work each week as well as maintaining a full-time class schedule. The application process begins in November and candidates are chosen early in winter quarter.

Renting a Single Room

An option that students may look into is responding to room advertisements on the Cal Poly housing website or Craigslist. There are rooms available in houses with other students as well as homes of local families and other non-students who have a spare room. The majority of ads all call for the same characteristics in a potential roommate: responsible, clean and respectful. The median price for a private room is between $500 and $600, and if the room is shared, the prices are lower. This living situation is especially appealing for students who are only a quarter or two away from graduation and don’t want to commit to a 12-month lease.

Civil engineering senior Jack Montgomery found his room by responding to a Craigslist ad. Since he is going to be done with school after March, the ad’s month-to-month lease made it an appealing option. “Since I was only going to be here for a short time, I wanted a living situation that was more of just a room rather than a place where I felt responsible to hang out with roommates,” he said. “I knew that a month-to-month lease could save me money since I would only have to pay for the time that I’d actually be living there.”

Living in a RV

For students who have access to a recreational vehicle or are interested in investing in one, there are a number of mobile home parks in San Luis Obispo who rent out spaces for a relatively low price. Instead of paying thousands of dollars to rent a house, a space of land only costs a couple hundred dollars a month.

Laguna Lake Mobile Estates, located on Pehluano Canyon Road, has 10 spaces that they rent see Cheap, page 16
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You’ve heard all the tips on studying well in advance and time management, but the reality is that a lot of us always end up cramming. It is the way of the college world, whether you are an art history or chemistry major. So instead of a list of ways to study properly in advance, here are some tips on cramming, staying awake and making those last few hours actually count.

Don’t get comfortable
It’s 2 a.m. and you still have a lot left to tackle for that final at 8 a.m., but your body is tired, your eyes are droopy and you feel terrible. You really should have thought about studying earlier, but don’t dwell on the past, it’ll likely send you spiraling into depression.

Your first instinct is to just grab your book and lay down in bed and study. Bad idea! You will most surely fall asleep and wake up panicking. The idea is to shock your system out of its comfort zone in order to keep yourself awake and focused as you can be. Remember, once everything is over you can sleep as much as you want.

For now, open the windows and let in some cold air. If you lose the cold, then turn up the heat. If you get sleepy while sitting down, stand up and walk around with your book. Remember, the more out-of-the-ordinary and inconvenient your setup is, the more likely your cramming session will succeed.

Beware of food
It is widely known that, after a good amount of food, all anyone wants to do is crash. Ordering full scale meals at 1 a.m. while studying is going to take a large chunk of time away from your cramming session and put you to sleep.

If you absolutely must eat while studying, make sure to stick to light snacks that can help the mind and metabolism. Granola bars, almonds, any sort of nuts and chocolate can be beneficial.

Energy drinks
“Along with a power nap, my two nights and weekends, to take care of everyday chores and respond to emergencies, animal science department head Andy Thulin said.

“What the students pay to live in these houses is less than what you would pay to live in the dorms or apartments,” he said.

Couch Surfing
The most unconventional of housing options is to couch surf. These individuals, some of which belong to a networking Web site called couchsurfing.com, enlist the hospitality of others and in turn, offer up their couch for strangers to sleep on while in San Luis Obispo. For responsible students who are comfortable living with minimal personal space, renting a couch is something worth looking into.

Cal Poly industrial engineering alumnus Eric Veum traveled throughout Europe by sleeping on people’s couches.

To give back to the site that offered him such great opportunities, Veum has offered his home to travelers passing through San Luis Obispo. Although he did not rent out couches while attending Cal Poly, he still said it was an easy way to get by.

“Couch-surfing pretty much changed my life,” he said.
Unorthodox finals week study tips

John Bailey
THE DAILY JOURNAL (C. CONNECTICUT)

Here are some nontraditional study strategies to get you through finals week.

Osmosis
So you skipped every class except basic biology. Don't stress out; remember that lesson about the magical properties of water? How it permeates everything, suffuses existence and binds the galaxy together? Take your textbooks, boil them until they dissolve, and bathe in the water once it cools. Mere hours later, you're pruny with the wrinkles of knowledge.

Black magic
Professor's confusing? TA showed up hungover again? Get your knowledge straight from the source: the long-dead spirits of the masters of your field. Nobody teaches physics like Einstein, and nobody knows philosophy like Plato. Use caution, though, as the spirits tend to bring quirks of their lives with them: most English writers show up hammered, the ancient philosophers all speak Greek and Wagner insists that you invade Poland before he'll teach you anything.

The real reason you bought that TI-83
After high school, I had nearly no skills and could barely walk without throwing up everywhere. But I could make a ball fall through holes in platforms like a champion. It's common knowledge that anything you put on a graphing calculator becomes instantly enthralling, embedding itself indelibly into your brain. You will never forget it, and will be compelled to open that program up whenever you've got a free moment, especially if you're in class.

Study deadly martial arts
There's no problem I haven't been able to solve by punching. I took a karate class once, and you know, it was the best decision of my life. The karate instructor wanted me to pay him for the class though, and that was a problem, but fortunately I knew how to punch, so I just punched some money out of thin air. When my gerbil died, I punched it back from the dead. You can learn to punch, too, and then you can just punch all those difficult poststructuralists right out of history.

Play video games
How will playing video games help you on your chemical engineering final? Simple! After you sell your textbooks, buy copies of "Left 4 Dead" for you and all your friends, and play them religiously up to the minute of the final. Superman will throw a brick wrapped in a sheet of paper through your window, and on that sheet of paper will be all the answers to the final. Couldn't be simpler.

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I used to think walking in on my parents was the worst-case scenario. However, coming to college and living with people my own age, I'm starting to wonder if it's better not to walk in on the roommate who's having sex.

Unfortunatly, my roommate's bed shares a wall with the shower. Living in downtown Chico means extra thin walls, and I'm constantly reminded of this because I overhear sharing, shouting and hearing "ooh," "ahh," or "harder!"

Getting clean has never been so dirty.

I find myself strategically planning my daily routine when no one is home, to avoid eavesdropping on any "private moments!"

At least parents try to be somewhat secretive when having down. From my experience, roommates are more likely to turn their sack sessions into a show-and-tell.

I will not understand the people who scream and yell during sex. I'm convinced the louder people are during intercourse, the more they just want their partners to get off and be done — unless, of course, they're rehearsing to star side by side with Jessica Simpson in her next adult film.

Roommates don't ever want to imagine us in XXX-rated videos, so it's probably best to keep the volume down for the sake of not only those who are wishing, but those who want to keep it class.

Another reason it's extremely awkward walking in on friends getting it on is because those are personal moments you're hearing and witnessing. The last thing I want is an engraved picture of somebody's private parts who isn't on you.

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Roommates

continued from page 11

Black says people would leave notes. If that didn’t work, or the issue was more serious, everyone would sit down for a house meeting to solve the issue.

History junior Chris Andrews transferred to Cal Poly at the beginning of the school year and moved in with a good friend from high school. He also has two other roommates that he says he’s become friends with. Some people worry about living with friends, especially good ones, but Andrews says it’s not a problem at his house.

“I swear, it’s so mellow,” Andrews says. “It’s working out really well.”

Andrews admits to being slightly messy, but says he tries to clean up for his housemates. He and his roommates started a rotating chore list in order to fairly divide up work such as taking out the trash or washing dishes.

“Think it’s a good thing (to live with friends),” Andrews says. “You can communicate better with friends. I feel more comfortable talking to someone I know about problems.”

No matter who you live with, communication is key, especially when it comes to talking about conflicts between you and your roommate.

Being able to sit down and work out problems that arise will help your living situation run more smoothly and help improve your relationship with your roommate(s).

Knowing yourself is another big factor in choosing a roommate. Are you an early riser or a night owl? Do you want your own room? Are you a neat freak or more casual about messiness? Is your house going to be the party house or the study area? Ask yourself all of these questions, and more, in order to find someone similar to you. Or go with someone whose schedule is the opposite.

Black says having an opposite schedule worked out well for her when she shared a room.

“I liked having my own room but I liked sharing too,” she says. “We had different schedules so it worked because we weren’t always in the room together.”

Also consider things like who will do what chores, what the rules are for guests staying over, the level of noise allowed, who gets which room and how much rent each roommate will pay. Talk about writing out an agreement to make sure everything is clear for all housemates, like what happens if someone needs to move out.

Make sure everyone agrees on whose name goes on the lease and utility bills and the conditions of your lease or rent. Sitting down with the landlord or rental agency to discuss details (such as if they will only accept one rent check each month) is not a bad idea either.

Above all, be honest, let your roommate know if you have a problem with something and be open when he or she comes to you with an issue.

It might not work out the first time around, but always keep in mind what went wrong so you don’t repeat the same mistakes with your next roommate.

“Just be respectful of your roommate’s things,” Andrews says. “I feel like that’s the main characteristic of a good roommate is you’re respectful.”
All nighter continued from page 16

trial-and-tested energy drinks a night help out roy all nighters. But that's me," said biology major David Wu.

Maybe one or two energy drinks won't hurt, but who knows! You are staying up all night regardless and that is not healthy to begin with. Whatever the case may be, it would be wise not to binge on these energy drinks since it could be likely that the crash from that high may just happen during your exam. The last thing your professors need is eraser pools as opposed to eraser stains on their tests. You may just be better off with some water or Gatorade since these will at least be able to keep you hydrated. The thing about energy drinks is that, besides the crash, they tend to dehydrate you. So buyers beware, Red Bull may be your friend at midnight but could be your worst enemy at 6 a.m.

Unconventional breaks

Breaks are going to have to be short, infrequent and productive in calming you down and keeping you awake. So during some of these breaks you need to make every second count. Walk outside and take in the cool air. It is going to be cold during finals week, so that may be able to help.

A quick shower could also be beneficial. Even if you’ve already showered, getting in there and having the water hit you will likely keep those eyes open.

This next tip obviously depends on the person. Some people (mostly guys) find that sex tends to put them to sleep, but the converse is not unheard of either. Having a quickie during a study break can do many things. It will reduce your stress level and make your brain release endorphins, neurotransmitters that gives you the feeling of wellbeing. But hey, having sex and then showering pretty fast can certainly make you feel better, more alert and ready for the rest of the night. Obviously, this can easily become a distraction so take that tip with some caution.

Other ideas involve getting up for five minutes every hour to do some quick exercising. This increases blood flow and allows your body to keep up with your mind.
Noise
continued from page 4

over any concerns. Give them your cell phone number and ask them to call you if there is a problem. Then give them the courtesy of responding to their concerns if they do call you.

— Make a plan. If you are going to host a party or gathering, make sure you have a sober, responsible person to monitor your noise level. Let your neighbors know about the party in advance and encourage them to call you directly if things get too loud. Pay attention to your guests' behavior outside of your house. Just like you don't want strangers urinating or littering in your yard, your neighbors don't either.

— Warnings are not always given. Student Neighborhood Assistant Program (SNAP) employees are students who respond to noise violations for SLOPD. They can dismiss a complaint, issue warnings or request officers to issue a citation.

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